

out the poor. . . . It may be considered farther, that if the cemeteries be thus thrown into the fields, they will bound the excessive growth of the city with a graceful border, which is now encircled with scavengers' dung-stalls."

Since then we have been piling up corruption to a fearful extent, in spite of warnings. Not a moment must be lost in stopping the evil. Again we say, petition for an Order in council.

AN APPEAL FROM THE ROYAL INSTITUTE OF BRITISH ARCHITECTS.

THE council of the institute, impressed with the importance and responsibility attached to their duties, are anxious to take such steps as may still more fully realize those results which are expected from the proceedings of the institute. They feel it to be necessary for all to bear in mind, that one of the great objects of the meetings is to elicit facts relating to the several departments of knowledge which are subservient to architecture. Many may imagine that investigation has already exhausted discovery. But if for a moment we consider how much each year develops that is new and useful to our art, it must be confessed that there is a vast field yet unexplored. And if we may hope to see embodied the intense aspiration of the present race of architects to discover some new source of inspiration, it must only be by a thorough appreciation of the state of science, and of the requirements of the present day. It was by the investigation of such principles that, under like circumstances, the men of genius of former periods brought to bear new appliances, in order to satisfy the wants of their times, and to work out the full capabilities of the new stream of thought which then presented itself. It is only thus that we also can hope to create and mature ideas which shall distinctly mark this epoch of our art, this period of the existence of the institute.

Never until now had English architects so fully mastered, by laborious study and deep research among the monuments of ancient time, all the phases that architecture has assumed in successive periods. The portfolios of our professional brethren are so many treasures, rich in stores of material, and evidences of how deeply their possessors have felt and thought on the subject. This is further proved by the monuments of our art and the various valuable works produced within the last quarter of a century. The concentration of these riches of reflection and experience is the great desideratum. Can this be better effected than by unreserved communications and interchange of ideas through the medium of the institute?

Under these feelings, and conscious that our body are capable of working out great things for the art, the council confidently appeal to the members, and call upon them to assist their earnest efforts to give that efficiency of action, and to produce those fruits, which the profession, the public,—shall we say? Europe—are entitled to expect from our combined exertions. They are most desirous to give additional stimulus and energy of purpose to the members, and to induce them to exert themselves, and to combine, in a movement onwards, in an united effort for some new and striking results, which shall redound to the credit of our honoured institution. There is many a floating idea, many an immature notion of a something un-realized, which, if expressed, may lead to striking results; and if they could be brought before the Institute, stated, discussed, and so diffused among many thoughtful minds, good must arise, and still greater variety and originality ultimately mark the productions of our artists.

But justice would not be done to the ample scope of our theme, if you were led to consider, that allusion was only intended to architecture as a fine art, to the exclusion of its scientific division. The aesthetics of each distinct period of architecture have grown out of the principles of construction then in practice, and hence have arisen new combinations of form and proportion. We are now undergoing a marked transition in the canons of construction; new materials, new wants have been introduced, and new elements for combination. The con-

structive architect of this day has larger views and almost boundless requirements to satisfy, which existed not half a century ago. All these circumstances suggest new subjects for consideration. The more precise form now given to the investigations and results of architectural experience in the several classes of building, each having its own laws, shows, that he who wishes to keep pace with the wondrous progress of the present time must work and think not alone but in combination. Such combination is peculiarly offered in the institute.

The council trust, then, to render the next session remarkable by a more distinct aim and activity of purpose. They would venture to anticipate, that the members will consider it a duty and a delight to contribute somewhat to the intellectual advancement which they hope to set in action. This can only be done by each one's turning his attention to the consideration of some idea. The illustration of an existing fabric,—the statement of a doubt,—the suggestion of a principle,—the development of a train of thought,—will contribute to this. There is not one who has not some, perchance indistinct, leading notion in his mind. Let this then assume a tangible shape, and such a contribution may produce important consequences.

T. L. DONALDSON, } Honorary
J. J. SCOLES, } Secretaries.

MANAGEMENT OF ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITIONS.

WHAT your correspondent "Y." says respecting the management of architectural competitions is excellent; yet there is one desideratum which he has overlooked, namely, that competitors should have a reasonable time allowed them for fairly studying the subject proposed. At present, this is so far from being the case, that very frequently scarcely time enough is allowed for merely making drawings,—or, perhaps, not even that, unless an architect either happen to be entirely disengaged, or can put all other business aside in order to work for the sake of a mere chance.

The off-hand expedition required on such occasions is an equally serious and gratuitous tax upon the profession; and, so far from at all benefiting those inflicting it, is plainly contrary to their interests, although they themselves seem to be far too dull to perceive it.

What better than hastily put together ideas can committees expect to get from architects, if they will not allow the time for producing thoroughly well considered and matured designs? And by "matured designs" I do not mean carefully finished drawings, for the latter may be and frequently are exceedingly common place in point of design. In fact, the drawings sent in to competitions should not be allowed even to aim at any of the allurements of mere pictorial effect, but both be and be looked upon by those to whom they are submitted as no more than preparatory drafts, which, should there be occasion to do so, can afterwards be transcribed quite fair. Beauty of mere drawing is apt to be so exceedingly seductive, especially to non-professional persons, that committees ought to be particularly on their guard against it, and carefully scrutinize a design that seeks so to recommend itself; they having to consider not what the drawing before them is, but what the structure erected after it will be, and how the latter will show itself.

As to the first matter I have touched upon—the hurry with which competitions are usually managed in the first instance becomes the more preposterous, when, as often turns out to be the case, a twelvemonth or more elapses before the work competed for is actually set about.

It is to be hoped the valuable suggestions of your correspondent "Y." in last week's *BUILDER*, will not fail to create the desired effect, but will be the means of stirring up the profession to a proper sense of the present disgraceful system upon which architectural competitions are carried on. Ever since your valuable journal was first started, scarcely a week has passed without complaints being made through your columns of some competition job. Yet, after all that has been said and written, nothing has been done practically to

remedy the evil. From experience it may be confidently asserted neither "institute reports," nor long letters to "THE BUILDER," will of themselves produce the desired reform. It is very well to blame committees, composed (as they generally are) of men totally incapable of forming a correct judgment of the relative merits of designs submitted to them, for all the evils attendant upon architectural competitions. For my own part I am inclined to think architects have only themselves to blame for the expenses they are subjected to in preparing drawings, when they, regardless of the risk they are incurring, submit their designs to the adjudication of men, who, from deficiency of education in the fine arts, are totally incapable of arriving at a correct decision. The difficulty then that presents itself, is how, the most effectually, to remedy the growing evil. The one suggested by your correspondent of a "monster meeting," of all parties interested, appears to be the only likely means of bringing about the desired reform, the object of which meeting would be to draw up a certain code of regulations sufficiently comprehensive to meet the requirements of almost every case, to which it should be the object of the meeting, or a committee appointed by it, to obtain the assent of the whole profession, binding them, at the risk of forfeiture of caste, to strictly adhere to them. A thorough reform of the present pernicious system would, doubtless, be the work of time, and difficulties would present themselves in the refusal of competition committees to accept the code of regulations submitted to them. In such cases it would be the duty of the profession to make a manly stand, and at every risk to refuse to compete. If such a course were pursued in one or two instances, by the profession, united committees would soon begin to see they must either give way, or put up with inferior designs, while it would also be the duty of the profession, however painful the adoption of such a course might be, to excommunicate from its honourable fellowship, any architect who might be found to engage in a competition against which the profession had authoritatively pronounced. It is very probable the subject will be energetically agitated before long, by means of public meetings; in the meanwhile I would suggest to the profession to give the subject mature thought, and reduce to writing any suggestions that might occur to them, so that when the agitation is once commenced, it may not be allowed to subside, without thoroughly removing the evils under which the present system labours.

C. G.

THE HONOUR OF THE LONDON AND NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY.

IN 1845 the London and North-Western Railway Company took the West London Railway, which had cost the proprietors 250,000*l.*, on lease for one thousand years, paying down 60,000*l.* to clear off liabilities, and hindering themselves to work the line efficiently, and give the West London Company half the receipts. And this was at a time when other companies would have purchased. They obtained an Act to extend the line to the Thames, and year after year have pledged themselves to the West London to carry on their arrangement. They now point-blank refuse to work the line, under any circumstances, for passenger traffic, or to pay any compensation to the West London. The poor deluded shareholders in the latter Company, who have never received a single sixpence for their 250,000*l.* long since advanced, are told that they would have no chance at law against so powerful a Company as the North-Western. They have called a special meeting, however, for the 19th of next month, to consider what course shall be pursued; and we hope, if they find that their deeds are all right, that they will try the extent of the boasted power of the North-Western Company over law, justice, and honour. Further, a very large population are interested in obtaining a station at Kensington.

BIRMINGHAM EXHIBITION OF INDUSTRIAL ART.—We have received some particulars of this exhibition of English industry, but must endeavour to see it for ourselves next week.